

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Debora Meskauskas, single mother, who met the President during the Presidential campaign, and her children Bridget and Mark; and Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel.

## **Proclamation 7406—American Heart Month, 2001**

*February 7, 2001*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

The year 2001 once seemed so distant that it became a symbol of science fiction. But today, researchers studying heart and other cardiovascular diseases have made 2001 a year when science rivals fiction.

Only 50 years ago, Americans were acknowledged to be suffering from an epidemic of heart disease. So little was known about the disease that it was thought part of the normal process of aging. Luck played a larger role in surviving a heart attack or hypertension than did medicine—and those who survived were forced to lead restricted lives.

But thanks to scientific advances and education, the death rate from coronary heart disease has fallen by nearly 60 percent since its peak in the mid-1960s. This startling improvement resulted not only from advances in the treatment of heart disease but also from gains in knowledge about its prevention. Scientists also have opened up new fields, including that of gene research. Their work promises to bring great improvements in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

But problems remain. In particular, how can the rewards of scientific advances be brought to all Americans? Racial, ethnic, and geographic gaps still exist in the burden of disease. The number one killer of women is cardiovascular disease.

Another challenge is the increase in certain conditions and heart disease risk factors. Obesity and physical inactivity pose still other problems. More than half of American adults are overweight and obese, about one in four

are sedentary, and another third are not active enough to reach a healthy level of fitness.

Meeting such challenges takes both will and technology. For example, researchers recently found that small changes in lifestyle that boost moderate-level physical activity can protect cardiorespiratory fitness and blood pressure as much as a structured exercise program. These are changes that all Americans can adopt.

Sudden death from cardiac arrest has also been a major health threat. Yet fortunately, more Americans are learning the warning signs of cardiac arrest. Calling 9–1–1 immediately and administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until an electric shock to the heart can be given to restore a normal heartbeat—a practice known as defibrillation—combined with early advanced care can result in long-term survival rates as high as 40 percent for certain types of cardiac arrest.

The Federal Government seeks to improve Americans' heart health by supporting research and public education through its National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health. The American Heart Association, through its research and education programs and its vital network of dedicated volunteers, also plays a crucial role in bringing about much-needed advances.

Americans have always believed in the power of science to improve lives, and it is their support and the use of scientific advances that has reduced the epidemic of heart disease. It will be through continued scientific efforts that we find even more answers and reduce the rate of heart disease even further.

In recognition of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 101) has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 2001 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject

to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating cardiovascular disease.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:50 a.m., February 8, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 9.

### **Proclamation 7407—National Burn Awareness Week, 2001**

*February 7, 2001*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Burn injuries are a serious problem in the United States. Each year, over 3,000 people die and 16,000 are injured by fires that start in the home. These fires cost the Nation over \$18 billion. Tragically, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are those most likely to become victims of serious burns. Children are particularly vulnerable. Each year, about 800 children under the age of 15 die of fire-related causes and about 500 of these deaths are to children under the age of 5 years. In fact, children under age 5 have a death rate from fire more than twice the national average.

All Americans can make their homes safer by making sure they have a working smoke alarm. About 90 percent of U.S. households have smoke alarms. However, a recent survey found that smoke alarms in 20 percent of those households—about 16 million—were not working, mostly because the battery was dead or missing. Those families who have not yet done so should place a smoke alarm inside each sleeping room and on each level of a multi-story home and make sure the alarms are tested monthly and the batteries are replaced when necessary.

We should also learn what to do in the event of fire, including the “stop, drop, and roll” maneuver that can help prevent serious burn injuries. Those families that have not yet done so should make plans for escaping a house fire—and every American family should review and practice the plan regularly.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) helps to keep children and families safe from products that pose fire dangers. CPSC activities have contributed to a decline in fires and fire deaths over the past several years. For example, CPSC’s standard for child-resistant lighters has helped reduce fire deaths from children playing with lighters by 43 percent since 1994.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush**, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 4 through February 10, 2001, as National Burn Awareness Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and activities and by learning how to prevent burn injuries, especially to children.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:50 a.m., February 8, 2001]

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### **Letter to Congressional Majority Leaders on the Patients’ Bill of Rights**

*February 7, 2001*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)*

I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with you last month at the White House to discuss our shared goal of passing a strong Patients’ Bill of Rights. Over the last two weeks my staff and I have met with Members of Congress from both parties, and I believe that we have an opportunity to work together